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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

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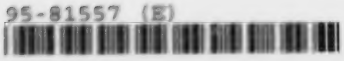

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 103: ELIMINATION OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION (continued) (A/50/18, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/467, A/50/468, A/50/476, A/50/493)

AGENDA ITEM 104: RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO SELF-DETERMINATION (continued) (A/50/485, A/50/390 and Add.1, A/50/407)

1. Mr. RATA (New Zealand) said that, following the success of the South African people in dismantling apartheid, the international community, which had contributed to that success, should take inspiration from the South African example and make a concerted effort to combat the new forms of racism which had been emerging in other parts of the world. New Zealand condemned the practice and consequences of "ethnic cleansing" in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. It was vital that investigations into those abuses should be pursued and that the individuals responsible should be made to face international justice before the Tribunal that had already started to operate in The Hague. Similarly, with respect to the systematic slaughter of thousands of innocent people in Rwanda simply because of their ethnic origin, longer-term initiatives had been taken in response to that manifestation of racism, including the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law in the Territory of Rwanda. If, however, Member States were firm in their resolve to bring the alleged perpetrators of acts of racism both in Rwanda and in the former Yugoslavia to justice, they should, as a matter of urgency, pay their assessed contributions in that regard and cooperate fully to permit the full investigation of the suspects and their handing over for trial.

2. With respect to the report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (A/50/476) New Zealand encouraged the Special Rapporteur to continue to coordinate his activities closely with all relevant mechanisms of the United Nations, including the Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

3. New Zealand, which was a multicultural, multiracial society, with its own indigenous population, recognized that it was still not completely free from the racial discrimination, which was a consequence of the country's history. The Government of New Zealand, however, had a strong political commitment to ensure that equality and non-discrimination became a reality in its society. In that regard, he recognized the important work of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which, in response to the tenth and eleventh consolidated reports submitted by New Zealand in August, had provided a number of concluding observations.

4. In 1992, New Zealand had joined in the decision of States parties to amend the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in order to place the Committee on a more secure financial footing, and it had already ratified the relevant amendments. Since the amendments needed to be accepted by

two thirds of the States parties in order to enter into force, New Zealand urged other States parties to follow its example.

5. Mr. EVRIVIADES (Cyprus) said that much remained to be done in the effort to combat racism. General Assembly resolutions relating to the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination provided a framework for action that should be adopted in that regard. The Third Decade should be viewed in the context of the Plan of Action for the Decade for Human Rights Education, the Programme of Action for the Decade for the World's Indigenous People and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, and also in the context of sustainable development. Efforts should therefore be made to ensure complementarity between those plans and programmes of action and to give the highest possible political priority to the goals of the Third Decade.

6. Cyprus urged those countries which had not yet ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination to do so. It also urged States parties to the Convention to make the requisite declaration under article 14 to enable direct communication of complaints from individuals or groups of individuals who claimed that their rights under the Convention had been violated by a State party. It was also important to request Governments to agree to the amendment to the Convention whereby funding for the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination would be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations.

7. With respect to the situation in Cyprus and to the final concluding observations contained in the report of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (A/50/18) concerning the Turkish occupation of part of the territory of Cyprus, he pointed out that Turkey had violated with impunity all the international covenants and human rights instruments by maintaining its invasion and occupation of 37.6 per cent of the northern part of the Republic of Cyprus for 21 years. One third of the total population and 80 per cent of the population of the occupied area had been forcibly expelled from their homes and properties by the invading Turkish army simply on account of their race. The policy of "ethnic cleansing" applied by the occupying Power was clearly an act of racial segregation, discrimination and neo-apartheid. Furthermore, Turkey refused to allow even a single refugee to return to his or her home, or to account for the fate of 1,619 missing Greek Cypriots. The Greek Cypriots and Maronites in the occupied part of Cyprus were discriminated against solely on the grounds of ethnic origin. The Turkish community had also suffered from the occupation since its population had been reduced from 120,000 inhabitants in 1974 to only 80,000 as a result of massive emigration. The continuing plundering of the cultural heritage of the Greek Cypriots and the changing demographic structure of the area under Turkish military occupation through massive importation of settlers were two additional characteristics of the unacceptable situation created in Cyprus through the force of arms. If the international community had taken effective measures in 1974 to prevent what had transpired, the similar deplorable acts witnessed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and elsewhere might not have occurred. If the United Nations resolutions in support of the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus had been enforced, other recent acts of unlawful international aggression might have been avoided. Bad precedents, when tolerated and condoned, tended to be repeated.

8. On the question of self-determination, his delegation supported the right to self-determination of nations and peoples under colonial rule and foreign occupation as a principle of international law and as a universal right recognized by the United Nations. However, partial views and misconceptions of the right to self-determination could encourage separatism based on ethnic considerations. The violation of the right to self-determination or its abuse would lead to international anarchy and chaos since very few States would escape its effects.

9. Mr. HAMIDA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) expressed his concern at the unleashing of various forms of racial discrimination. In various regions of the world, theories of racial hegemony had surfaced which had created new hotbeds of racism, sometimes covert and at other times explicit. In some countries there had been calls for the establishment of racist gangs similar to the Nazi and Fascist groups which committed acts of terrorism against minorities, foreigners and immigrants and, regrettably, some of those groups were protected by the law. The report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance (A/50/476) included a number of examples of such activities. With respect to the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, it was important to implement the programmes, provide sufficient funding and ensure that all States had the political will to fulfil their commitments.

10. With respect to the question of self-determination, the increase in the membership of the United Nations from 51 to 185 States was proof of the many successes the Organization had achieved. Efforts must, however, continue in order to obtain self-determination for all peoples under foreign domination. Such was the case of the Palestinian people, who had the right to establish an independent State covering the entire territory.

11. At the international level, interference in the internal affairs of States continued to impede the exercise of the principle of self-determination. The policy of threats applied by major Powers against small States jeopardized the independence of the latter and was an obstacle to the right of peoples to self-determination. The increasing use of mercenaries, as well as their training and funding, was proof that such activities were on the rise and that they only served to aggravate regional tension and threaten the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had faced such circumstances in the past and currently witnessed the conduct of the United States, which welcomed persons fleeing the country, as well as extremists from other countries, and trained them in the use of weapons to commit acts of sabotage that violated international law. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya condemned all forms of interference in the internal affairs of States, affirmed the right of States to self-determination and urged all States to refrain from harbouring mercenaries and to respect the sovereignty of other States.

12. Mrs. AHMED WAHBI (Sudan) said that, in dealing with the item on racial discrimination, efforts of the international community had previously been focused on apartheid; since that scourge had been eliminated, attention should focus on new forms of discrimination in the world such as racism, xenophobia, selectivity in the granting of assistance, and so on. Those new phenomena had

caused serious tension in the world and threatened to undermine mutual respect among cultures and peaceful coexistence.

13. Since the establishment of the United Nations, many States had exercised their right to self-determination, achieved independence and become Member States. Sudan considered that the countries that had the right to self-determination were those under the colonial yoke or under foreign occupation and that that right could not be invoked as an argument in favour of the disintegration or dismemberment of sovereign States. Consequently, the Sudan agreed with the position of the African countries which had decided, as early as the 1960s and within the framework of the Organization of African Unity, that the frontiers inherited from the colonialist era should be maintained, since to do otherwise would have meant destroying African unity and would therefore have constituted a threat to international peace and security. Her delegation wished also to reaffirm its steadfast position regarding respect for the human person, since the human person was the basis of society. Dignity and respect for all rights were an integral part of the Islamic religion.

14. With regard to the use of mercenaries, her delegation agreed with many, but not all, of the conclusions set out in the report of the Special Rapporteur (A/50/390). In referring to the Sudan, the Special Rapporteur highlighted problems experienced in the south of the country. Those uprisings that had occurred were due to the activities of persons who had initially professed a Marxist, communist ideology which had earned them the support of certain countries of the Eastern bloc. Since the collapse of that bloc, those groups had changed their ideological orientation and currently, as propaganda to attract world sympathy, claimed to be a Christian majority under subjugation. The citizens of the southern part of the Sudan represented 20 per cent of the Sudanese population; 18 per cent of them were Muslim, 17 per cent were Christian, and the rest practised local religions.

15. There was no doubt that the use of mercenaries prolonged wars and increased instability and that trafficking in weapons threatened the lives of innocent citizens. The Sudan had had first-hand experience of such a tragedy based on the assistance given by the Eastern bloc to insurgent groups, and had made a huge effort to overcome the problems persisting in the south.

16. With reference to paragraph 44 of document A/50/390, she said that, while her delegation agreed with the description of the uprising in the south of the Sudan as having been led by a guerrilla force, it disagreed with the statement that the Government's intolerance had led it to perpetrate acts of violence against those groups. The Special Rapporteur should be aware of the fact that the Sudan, based on its culturally, ethnically and religiously diverse society, had adopted a federal system of government under which the country was divided into 26 provinces governed by citizens elected by free and direct suffrage; that 9 out of 10 local governments in the south were run by citizens from those regions; that the Government of the Sudan had on more than five occasions declared a unilateral cease-fire; that on more than five occasions it had decreed a general amnesty for the insurgents and had invited them to lay down their arms so that they could be integrated into society and that, in its efforts to resolve the problems of the south, the Government had chosen the path of peace.

17. In the same paragraph 44 of his report, the Special Rapporteur had referred to the existence of paramilitary training camps which the authorities had not taken any steps to prevent. In that regard, it was important to clarify that the camps established under government auspices were camps for compulsory military service by Sudanese nationals who were defending their territory. Those camps had been visited on numerous occasions and the Sudan was prepared to receive anyone who wished to do so.

18. The Sudan, with its widely diverse cultures, ethnic groups and religions, was an example of peaceable coexistence. That very diversity, which was a source of enrichment for humankind, was an important factor since, far from dividing the nation, it gave it cohesiveness.

19. Mrs. SHARFMAN (Israel) said that the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples was one of the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations. While much progress had been achieved with respect to the issue of the elimination of all forms of racism and racial discrimination, much still remained to be done. In the report of the Special Rapporteur to the Commission on Human Rights in February 1994, 50 years after the foundation of the United Nations, the end of the Second World War and the holocaust, anti-semitism was described as a form of racial discrimination which had led to one of the greatest scourges that the world had known in the past and continued to experience.

20. Israel viewed with great concern the recent attempts by extreme right-wing elements to use cultural relativism as a justification for their racism and segregationism. That only led to further division and hatred between peoples. Regrettably, those extremist views were gaining popularity around the world and Israel called upon States Members of the United Nations to take active measures to combat the rise in intolerance.

21. With respect to the tragic events in the territory of the former Yugoslavia in the form of "ethnic cleansing", Israel, which had extended humanitarian aid to the refugees and victims, fully supported international efforts to resolve the conflict. It welcomed the measures taken by Governments and intergovernmental organizations in areas such as education in human rights and other measures to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-semitism and intolerance, and, in particular, the official recognition of the evils of racism and anti-semitism.

22. Under section 7 of the basic law of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset), parties espousing a racist ideology were banned from participating in elections to the Knesset. That, among other measures, together with Israel's treatment of non-Jewish citizens, were a source of pride, since all enjoyed full personal, religious and civil rights like those of any Israeli citizen.

23. In recent years, Israel and its neighbours had made great progress in their efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. On 26 October 1994, Israel and Jordan had signed a peace treaty ending a 46-year state of war between the two countries. More recently, on 28 September 1995, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization had signed the Interim

Agreement which provided for the election of a Palestinian Council and for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from 6 towns and 450 villages in the West Bank.

24. The Arab-Israeli conflict would, however, come to an end only when peace treaties had been signed with all Israel's neighbours. Once again, Israel called upon Syria and Lebanon to take an active role in the peace process. It was vital to seize the historic opportunity to move towards a new Middle East, one without warfare, hatred or division. The peace process in the region remained fragile. Israel urged the Third Committee not to adopt resolutions that might prejudice negotiations between Israel and its neighbours, since that would only poison the soil in which the peace process was attempting to take root. On the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it was incumbent upon all States to transform into reality the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

25. Mr. VALENCIA (Ecuador) said that the main contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination was its influence on the States parties to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination through the dialogue that took place when their periodic reports were being considered. The Committee had succeeded in identifying many latent and covert forms of racial discrimination that were not institutionalized or the result of official doctrine. No country was exempt from the phenomenon of discrimination, which had a variety of causes.

26. Despite the efforts of the international community and the Committee in particular, racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, inter alia, persisted and had taken on alarming proportions in many countries, as in the case of "ethnic cleansing" in the former Yugoslavia. The Committee had therefore attached prime importance to article 4 of the International Convention. However, the provisions of the article had not yet been universally implemented owing to inadequate legislation or shortcomings in the measures adopted for the purpose. The Committee had drawn the attention of States to the importance of teaching, education and culture, in accordance with article 7 of the International Convention, as powerful tools for combating racial discrimination and promoting harmony and understanding between diverse groups.

27. Although the Committee based its work on the consideration of reports and other information supplied by States parties, States unfortunately often failed to comply with their obligation to submit reports at the intervals established by the Convention. Indeed some had not even submitted their initial report. It should be added in that connection that in some reports racial or ethnic distinctions had been mixed with religious or political opinions. Moreover, the text of the Convention offered little guidance with respect to differentiation between ethnic and political motives, an issue compounded by the way in which racial discrimination was defined.

28. The Committee had decided that the prevention of racial discrimination, in particular early warning and urgent procedures, should feature as a permanent item on its agenda. The Committee had been applying such procedures at its recent sessions with satisfactory results. Alongside those mechanisms, and also with encouraging results, the Committee had introduced the practice of sending good offices missions with the consent of the State party concerned and had also

contributed to the work of the Decades to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the world conferences.

29. It was the Committee's practice to issue a statement, on concluding its consideration of the reports submitted by States parties, concerning the progress made and the difficulties encountered by the State party in complying with the obligations established by the Convention. It also drew attention to the principal subjects of concern and made relevant recommendations. The concluding observations reflected the collective opinion of the Committee members and offered guidance for follow-up action by the State party and the Committee's supervisory work. It collaborated with the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and had maintained useful contacts with a number of special rapporteurs and with the Commission on Human Rights and other bodies.

30. An innovative mechanism introduced by the International Convention was that provided for under article 14. As at 18 August 1995, only 22 States parties had made the declaration required to give effect to the article in their territory. With regard to universal implementation of the Convention, it should be noted that some States with major international influence were not yet parties to the instrument. Unless some new initiative were taken, universal accession would not be achieved by the year 2000.

31. With regard to the right of peoples to self-determination, Ecuador wished to express deep satisfaction at the conclusion of the agreements between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority that would allow the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination. The agreements also provided for the return of territories occupied by force, a principle of international law that Ecuador viewed as a fundamental requirement for the peaceful coexistence of nations. Ecuador again urged States to facilitate implementation of the principle of self-determination by peoples still subject to colonial or foreign domination.

AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (A/50/3, A/50/84-E/1995/12, A/50/114, A/50/156, A/50/163, A/50/181-E/1995/65, A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/254-S/1995/501, A/50/370, A/50/374, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/454 and 473)

32. The CHAIRMAN drew attention, at the opening of the discussion on item 105, to draft resolution A/C.3/50/L.2 entitled "International Year of Older Persons: towards a society for all ages", which the Economic and Social Council had recommended to the General Assembly for adoption, and noted that measures related to the draft resolution would be adopted in due course.

33. Mr. KRASSOWSKI (Assistant Director of the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development) recalled that the General Assembly decision to convene the World Summit for Social Development had been taken in response to a draft proposal submitted by the Third Committee three years previously. At the current session, the results of the Summit and the follow-up action proposed would be

discussed by the General Assembly in plenary meeting. The Committee would therefore be considering only those documents relating to agenda item 105.

34. Introducing the interim report on the world social situation (A/50/84), he pointed out that section II contained a draft framework for the report on the world social situation to be submitted in 1997. He invited members of the Committee to review the draft framework, especially in the light of the decisions adopted at the Summit. The document concerning monitoring of the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (A/50/374) incorporated the report by the Special Rapporteur on that matter. It should be noted that the Commission for Social Development had requested that the report and the responses from Governments to the Special Rapporteur's preliminary questionnaire should be circulated, under agenda item 105, as a document of the General Assembly. In that context, the document concerning implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons (A/50/473) reported on the progress of efforts to ensure the equalization of opportunities and full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the various bodies of the United Nations system, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/95.

35. Turning to the report on the observance of the International Year of the Family (A/50/370), he drew attention in particular to paragraphs 135 and 136 containing specific proposals on possible follow-up to the Year. Turning to the question of ageing, he said that the Secretary-General's report on a conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 (A/50/114) suggested as theme for the Year "Towards a society for all ages" and, to ensure that priority attention would be given to the situation of older persons, that its objective should be "promotion of the United Nations Principles for Older Persons".

36. Lastly, he noted that the draft world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond had been in gestation for a number of years and had been the subject of intense effort on the part of the Working Group of the Economic and Social Council. He understood that a draft text would be submitted to the General Assembly at the plenary meetings in late October 1995. It was to be hoped that the programme of action would reaffirm the concern of the United Nations and of Governments to improve the situation and recognize the role of young people in the world.

37. Mr. FERNÁNDEZ (Spain), speaking on behalf of the States members of the European Union, referred, in the context of social development, to the work of the United Nations concerning persons with disabilities. The Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities set out important practical measures to achieve those equal opportunities and to remove barriers which restricted or ruled out the full participation of those persons in society. Various international conferences had supported those Standard Rules, stressing the need to develop strategies for their implementation. The European Union wished to emphasize the need to monitor the application of the Rules at the national level, and strongly supported the work, in the framework of the Commission for Social Development, of the Special Rapporteur, particularly his recommendations on the need to offer more advice and assistance

to developing countries in their efforts to apply the Standard Rules, as well as to focus follow-up activities on certain areas.

38. However, only 42 countries had submitted replies to the Special Rapporteur's questionnaire; the European Union urged a greater response by States and non-governmental organizations to the second questionnaire on the implementation of the Standard Rules. Governments should also supply adequate finance for the activities of the United Nations concerning persons with disabilities, including the work of the Special Rapporteur. To reflect the importance the European Union attached to that area of social development, he pointed out that, by means of the Helios II programme and its predecessors, the European Union had for some years been actively involved in providing a favourable environment for persons with disabilities.

39. The European Union had studied with interest the report of the Sec ary-General on the observance of the International Year of the Family (A/5(/0), and the specific proposals it contained. An important part of the con sions, which the European Union wholeheartedly supported, concerned the universal ratification and implementation of human rights instruments, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The European Union also agreed with the view expressed in the above-mentioned report that follow-up activities should be part of a holistic approach to development and social progress, focusing on the local and national levels and being integrated into existing policies and programmes. At the international level, follow-up activities should be in keeping with the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of recent United Nations conferences.

40. Population ageing, which had been observed in the developed regions for several decades, was a phenomenon which could now be found in many developing countries. However, societies could cope with the economic and social challenges posed by demographic changes by taking the growing number and proportion of older persons into account in their medium- and long-term social and economic planning. Faced with a situation without precedent in that area, the General Assembly had decided to observe 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. The Secretary-General's report on the subject (A/50/114) included some important questions that would have to be taken into account to ensure appropriate preparation for the Year. The European Union was satisfied with the theme proposed for the Year, as it broadly encompassed the situation of older persons. It also believed that the emphasis should be placed on activities at the local and national levels, and that the participation of older persons at all stages of the preparations would be especially important. Finally, the European Union noted that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would serve as the focal point for the Year, which would allow the necessary consideration to be given to the recent results of United Nations conferences and the input of the whole United Nations system to be taken into account.

41. Mrs. TAVARES de ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic) said that in the past decade the United Nations had organized several world conferences and summits in an effort to promote social development and raise living standards. The United Nations should be encouraged to achieve those objectives and helped to overcome

the obstacles which it might meet. The poor, the hungry, the unemployed, children, the ageing, the illiterate, those with disabilities, refugees, displaced persons, men and women unjustly excluded from or marginalized by society would, ultimately, be those who judged whether the enormous human and financial resources assigned to those conferences had been justified.

42. Since 1971, the Commission for Social Development had met every two years. In order for it to do its work and meet its new responsibilities, including the actions resulting from the World Summit, it would have to meet annually. At its thirty-fourth session, the Commission had made recommendations which would strengthen its capacity to apply and closely follow the agreements reached at the Summit. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1995/60, had requested the Secretary-General to make arrangements for a special session of the Commission in order to consider the composition of the membership of the Commission, review its mandate and develop a multi-year programme of work to the year 2000. It had also decided that the Commission should adapt its mandate, taking into account the relationship between social and economic development.

43. The Commission for Social Development coordinated all questions relating to ageing and supervised plans and programmes of action, including the International Plan of Action on Ageing. The Dominican Republic, a member of the Commission since 1987, had particularly concerned itself with promoting the integration of older persons into the life of society, a matter which had been left to one side for a long time. Observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 would be the next stage in the development of the Plan of Action on Ageing. The all-encompassing theme of the year: "towards a society for all ages" was an appeal for the participation of all generations and large and small organizations from all sectors of society. The conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the Year (A/50/114) was a first, important step towards the integration of each and every member of society.

44. In order to strengthen the Commission's capability, the Dominican Republic would recommend at the special session that the theme "International Year of Older Persons" should be included in the agenda of every session of the Commission up until the year 2000; that explicit reference should be made, as appropriate, to older persons during general monitoring of the follow-up of the Summit's recommendations, particularly with respect to poverty, employment and integration; that contacts should be made between the Commission for Social Development and other operational bodies, including the Commission on Population and Development and the programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations; that non-governmental organizations and representatives of the private sector interested in the question of ageing should be invited to take part in the Commission's work and that an in-session open-ended ad hoc working group should be established to assist the Commission. She hoped that those suggestions would be supported by all representatives.

45. Mr. BARTNES (Norway), speaking as youth representative of his country, said that neither living conditions and opportunities for youth nor the position of youth issues within the United Nations system had improved in the decade since the observance of International Youth Year in 1985. However, it was encouraging to observe that the United Nations recognized the need for a global youth policy and had produced the draft world programme of action for youth towards the year

2000 and beyond, which would be adopted during the current session of the General Assembly. The programme focused on such questions as AIDS, hunger, unemployment and drug abuse and gave the impression that youth policy was seen merely as a means to prevent a number of problems. The programme should reflect a more positive view of youth.

46. Despite the fact that children and youth constituted the majority of the world's population, their views and problems were still overlooked by Governments and the international community. Modern society excluded youth from politics, administration, business and trade unions, leaving them without an appropriate framework for the expression of their needs. However, their imagination, ideals, energy and vision were essential for the development of the societies in which they lived. The youth of today were the decision makers of tomorrow; by participating constructively at local, regional and global levels and they would gain experience of how democracy worked. Governments should allow them to form their own associations without interference, and encourage them to participate at all levels by providing them with financial and moral support.

47. The United Nations needed young people to succeed in coping with the important challenges facing the United Nations system. Governments should be encouraged to include youth representatives in their delegations to the United Nations General Assembly and other important meetings, as recommended in General Assembly resolution 47/85. The United Nations should provide financial resources to ensure that the Youth Forum of the United Nations system could take place in 1996. In addition, young people should be recognized as a group with special needs and desires. The United Nations and Governments were responsible for applying the world programme of action for youth and for ensuring that future generations would be able to participate actively in building a better world.

48. Mr. KALLEHAUGE (Denmark), head of the International Committee set up by the Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People and Vice-President of the Nordic Council of Organizations of Disabled People, said that the eradication of poverty, productive employment and social integration, which had been central themes of the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, were highly relevant issues for disabled people. It was gratifying that the disabled had not been excluded from the Summit and many of their problems had been treated in the appropriate context, as was reflected in the final text of the Summit declaration and Programme of Action.

49. The General Assembly had been designated as the principal policy-making and appraisal body on matters relating to follow-up on the Summit. Among the follow-up measures considered most important by both the Danish Government and the non-governmental organizations were designing indicators of social development and improving national capacities in that area. For the disabled, that meant monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Since the Standard Rules had been adopted, the Nordic organizations had been considering whether a disability index based on the Standard Rules could be developed as a yardstick for implementing the Rules. The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People had developed such a disability index, designed in collaboration

with the Institute of Political Science at Aarhus University (Denmark) and funded by DANIDA, the Danish development agency. That index provided a true and fair picture of the situation in any country at a given time. The major international disability organizations had asked the Danish Council to implement the first global test of what could become a global disability index. Questionnaires had been distributed to the approximately 45 developing countries that were the main receivers of development assistance from the Nordic countries, which, along with the States members of the European Union, made up the group of 20 industrialized countries which would also test the index. It was hoped that the results would be presented in the UNDP Human Development Report.

50. Considering that the major goals of UNDP were to eliminate poverty and build an enabling environment, the international handicapped movement was convinced that persons with disabilities, as the poorest of the poor, were included in the UNDP strategy, and it was looking forward to strengthened cooperation between national organizations of disabled people and the UNDP resident coordinators. Such coordination would create greater equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Danish Council of Organizations of Disabled People, like its sister organizations in the European Union member States, was preparing proposals for revision of the Treaty on European Union. Denmark had written a clause on equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

51. Ms. BINDERKRANTZ (Denmark), speaking as the representative of the Danish Youth Council, said that "think globally, act locally" was an appropriate guideline for action in the field of youth. It was crucial to understand that the implementation of the goals established at the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women required local action and the development of a democratic culture.

52. Young people could play an important role in the development of such a culture. Therefore, Governments must support and encourage the young people's own initiatives, give them free rein to form their own organizations and provide the necessary framework for different kinds of activities. Governments must also seek to involve the youth and youth organizations in decision-making, particularly in the local communities. Participation in local decisions could provide a good education for young people and serve as an efficient tool for achieving the aims of local development policies. Therefore, international organizations as well as countries in general should make the participation of youth a vital component of their development policies.

53. Young people must be educated in order to become active participants in the shaping of society. Governments should ensure that their school systems included knowledge about the structures of society and democracy and made provision for greater student participation. The non-formal education that could be obtained in non-governmental organizations was a good supplement to the education provided by the formal school system, since young people could take decisions, assume responsibility and learn how to participate in democratic processes in youth organizations.

54. Young people must be educated as global citizens, be made aware of international issues and be involved in international decisions. The United Nations and its agencies must take initiatives to that end as they had already done in connection with the World Youth Forum scheduled for the following year. She also welcomed the fact that more countries than usual would be sending young delegates for the debate on youth scheduled to take place in plenary meetings before the end of the month. She hoped that there would be an increase in the number of countries that found it important to give young people the chance of being heard in the United Nations system, since it was crucial for the youth to be given the opportunity to participate fully in society and to ensure that the commitments made at the World Summit for Social Development led to concrete action.

55. Ms. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that the report of the Secretary-General containing the interim report on the world social situation for 1997 contained a series of recommendations, commitments, programmes of action and plans of action adopted at the major international conferences held by the United Nations in the area of education, women, food, the environment, human rights, population, social development and human settlements. Those conferences had made the international community aware of the deterioration in the social fabric and of the inadequacy of the various models, institutions, policies and programmes that had been applied thus far. Nevertheless, the interim report tended to generalize the progress made in the economic and social fields. The interim report should not comprise a compendium of general facts but should rather be based on an objective analysis of different situations and propose appropriate solutions whenever possible. Moreover, because of their adverse consequences for social development, environmental problems should also be included.

56. Concerning the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development which had clearly identified actual development problems, some aspects that were essential for the implementation of programmes had been overlooked, especially necessary financial resources. Currently, an appropriate follow-up mechanism needed to be established.

57. As far as literacy was concerned, much still remained to be done in order to achieve the common objective established by the International Literacy Year and the World Conference on Education for All. Burkina Faso endorsed the process of evaluation of achievements in the context of education for all and endorsed the holding of regional meetings to identify successful strategies and methods and to organize exchanges. However, urgent steps needed to be taken to increase school enrolment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, decrease the drop-out rate, avoid overcrowding in classrooms and improve the quality and content of teaching.

58. Her country had launched a major programme to democratize learning by including in school curricula the teaching of human rights, the basic principles of the Constitution of Burkina Faso, professional ethics and programmes relating to population, the environment and the family. The quantitative and qualitative aims were to raise the school enrolment rate to 40 per cent by 1996 and to improve the quality of teaching through the hiring and training of teaching staff. Burkina Faso's new educational policy was based on two important projects: the opening of satellite schools and non-formal basic education

centres. The aim of those projects was to ensure that the youth who did not receive any schooling or who dropped out early from the traditional educational system received better instruction. The aim of operation "ZANU", designed to combat illiteracy, was to create conditions that were propitious to sustainable economic and social development and to promote the establishment of community organizations.

59. Concerning preparations for the International Year of Older Persons, the Commission for Social Development should consider in detail the four dimensions of ageing listed in document A/50/114, taking into account the different circumstances of older persons especially the most vulnerable among them. She welcomed the proposed theme "Towards a society for all ages" because society should include everyone on the basis of respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultural and religious diversity and social justice. The proposed timetable should make provision for the holding of regional meetings in order to facilitate coordination and greater efficiency of the work.

60. She welcomed the efforts made by the United Nations Secretariat towards the implementation of the resolution on improving access by disabled persons to buildings, services and sources of information. Such measures should be extended to regional and local offices of the United Nations.

61. The Commission for Social Development should consider the situation of developing countries and, in particular, identify obstacles that prevented the involvement of disabled persons in the activities of their society and find means of eliminating such obstacles. In that regard, the lack of financial resources was, in itself, one of the major obstacles and the Commission and the Group of Experts should make recommendations thereon.

62. Burkina Faso supported the Special Rapporteur's recommendations, and wished to draw attention to action the country had taken, such as reducing the cost of health and transportation, establishing a disability card, setting up solidarity courses and organizing disabled persons into income-generating production associations. Steps had also been taken to facilitate integration of the disabled into the schools at the different levels.

63. Burkina Faso agreed that activities in conjunction with the International Year of the Family should follow a global approach to development and social advancement, and proposed active international coordination of the activities being carried out at the local, national and regional levels. National programmes of actions ought, moreover, to be updated in the light of measures recently taken to benefit the family. Nevertheless, the most important part of the follow-up mechanism was the material, financial and logistical ability of a State to launch its programme of action and achieve the stated goals.

64. Burkina Faso supported the Secretary-General's proposal for a continued expansion of the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family and also underscored the important role to be played by non-governmental organizations in the activities of the Year. The main objective her country had set itself in that respect was to improve the quality of life of each individual within the family unit. The Government had taken steps to make housing more accessible to the population and had started a programme of activities to

promote urbanization. Action on behalf of young people was directed primarily towards preventing delinquency, improving conditions of work and employment, promoting creativity and social and cultural activities and continuing to reintegrate street children into their families, the schools and vocational fields.

65. Ms. OLSZOWSKI (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) said that education was a basic human right and a means towards social achievement. The report of the Secretary-General and the Director-General of UNESCO on the International Literacy Year (A/50/181), gave a realistic mid-decade assessment of progress achieved and difficulties encountered in the pursuit of the goals of the Year. Even though some brilliant results, as recorded in the statistical data in the document, had been scored, they fell far short of the ambitions of the international community and the coalition of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes that had participated in the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand. An estimated 885 million adults were still illiterate, there was a continuing gender gap and some 129 million school-age children were denied access to primary education. UNESCO, in close cooperation with the Jomtien coalition and other partners, was doing its utmost in that direction.

66. The World Declaration on Education for All adopted at Jomtien on 9 March 1990 emphasized that schooling must be viewed as a means and not as an end. As a follow-up to the Jomtien agreement, the International Consultative Forum on Education for All had been set up to monitor progress towards that goal and to promote consultation and cooperation at the global level. Among the most significant activities undertaken as a follow-up to the Jomtien Conference was the Education for All Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries that had taken place at New Delhi in December 1993, at the invitation of the Government of India and with the support of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNESCO. Those nine countries - Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan - comprised more than 50 per cent of the world's population and were home to more than 70 per cent of its adult illiterates.

67. In response to the growing concern over the quality of education in many developing countries and specially the least developed among them, UNESCO and UNICEF had commissioned a study that would provide a relatively reliable estimate of the extent and exact nature of such problems. Armed with such information, the international community would be able to devise an appropriate strategy. The hope was that the current historic session of the General Assembly would adopt a resolution taking stock of the prevailing situation and guaranteeing a subsequent review of the work done, possibly at the end of a decade of action, in the year 2001.

68. As part of UNESCO's focus on the education of young people, it had specific projects for street children and young indigenous people. Also, in the case of young girls and women, the Beijing Conference had confirmed UNESCO's long-standing policy of giving highest priority to their education. In Africa, where such needs were most acute, cooperative programmes had been set up with 23 countries in the region specifically to deal with the education of girls. Those

programmes were part of the follow-up to the Pan-African Conference on Education for Girls, held in Burkina Faso in 1993.

69. It was essential for young people to participate in the media. The UNESCO Director-General had co-sponsored with the French Government an International Youth Clearing House and Information Service (INFOYOUTH). In order to make the Service more international in scope, activities had been conducted through various networks established in different regions and countries of the world. Furthermore, UNESCO intended to make a substantial contribution to the world youth programme for action towards the year 2000 and beyond that would be submitted to the General Assembly at its current session, in observance of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

70. With regard to those with special educational needs, the social policy of the last 20 years had sought to promote the integration and participation of all members of society without exclusion, and that trend must continue. Three UNESCO instruments were of relevance to disabled persons: first, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education of 1960; secondly, the Sundberg Declaration of 1981; and thirdly, the Salamanca Declaration of 1994. Those instruments gave UNESCO a foundation for ensuring, in close cooperation with its partners, better living conditions for the disabled.

71. UNESCO and the Government of Spain had organized the World Conference on Special Educational Needs in Salamanca, Spain, from 7 to 10 June 1994. The participants had renewed their commitment to education for all and recognized the necessity of providing education for children, young people and adults with special educational needs within the regular school system. Other seminars and meetings had later been held as a follow-up to the Conference. Moreover, the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, had also taken up the question of the inclusion of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in social development. Lastly, UNESCO would in 1996 be submitting a project proposal that would serve as a follow-up plan of action to the Salamanca Conference.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
9th meeting
held on
Friday, 13 October 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TCHERING (Bhutan)

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AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.3/50/SR.9
25 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

95-81575 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/50/3, A/50/84-E/1995/12, A/50/114, A/50/156, A/50/163, A/50/181-E/1995/65, A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/254-S/1995/501, A/50/370, A/50/374, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/454, A/50/473; A/CONF.166/9).

1. Mr. BARRETO (Peru) said that, during the past five years, his country had been carrying out a reform programme, a structural adjustment programme and a social support project with its own resources and with assistance from international financial institutions, the United Nations and bilateral donors. That effort, which was fully in keeping with many of the objectives agreed at the Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development, sought to create real conditions for the overall development of the country on the basis of economic and social stability, guarantee minimum conditions for the development of individuals, families and communities and to carry out international agreements reached at the relevant United Nations conferences.

2. The structural reform programme, begun in 1990, included a range of measures to alleviate poverty, including social programmes for the most impoverished, active participation on the part of the target population groups, the allocation of greater resources for social expenditures and improved management of those resources. The Government had developed social investment projects designed to generate employment. By September 1995, 857,000 new jobs had been created; and projects had been launched in the fields of education, health care, institution-building and meeting food needs in poor urban and rural areas. The Government sought to respond to the most urgent needs of the population by providing essential services in those areas and building the necessary basic infrastructure.

3. As part of the strategy to alleviate poverty, the per capita social expenditure had increased between 1990 and 1994 by approximately 600 per cent. Peru's 1995 budget for meeting social needs was approximately twice as large as its 1994 budget in that area and the target agreed upon at the Copenhagen Summit. In general, $300 million had been allocated to primary health programmes; 4,000 health centres were being upgraded; the infant mortality rate had been reduced to a quarter of that for the period 1985-1990. Food aid had been provided to 3 million persons in need and 365 secondary schools had been constructed and equipped throughout the country.

4. Mr. TELLES RICEIRO (Brazil) said that the recent major United Nations conferences had demonstrated that the problems facing the international community in such areas as human rights, population, employment, hunger, education and health, must be dealt with through an integrated approach linking social and sustainable development. A country's capacity to satisfy the needs of its people depended on good social indicators, political stability, economic competitiveness and scientific and technological progress, not military strength. Greater emphasis should be placed within the United Nations on the issue of development, which was the key to shaping a civilized society.

5. His country had been directing its efforts and resources towards unemployment reduction, housing, health priorities and education. Government programmes in those fields had always taken into consideration the needs of the more deprived segments of society, with special attention to the needs of youth and families. In agriculture, plans for implementing an agrarian reform were being carried out with renewed vigour in order to reform land tenure and modernize production techniques. That, in turn, required more sophisticated labour, which called for training programmes and more emphasis on primary education.

6. There were specific programmes to better integrate the disabled and older persons into society, offering them a chance to improve their lives while contributing to the social well-being of their communities. Brazil's solidarity community programme, for example, sought to eradicate absolute poverty through a comprehensive approach, and lowering infant mortality and improving sanitation, sewerage and water treatment. By developing such pilot programmes and integrating them into existing projects which also benefited the disabled and older persons, Brazil hoped to improve the quality of life for all its people.

7. Mr. SEPELEV (Russian Federation) underscored the need to implement the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (A/CONF.166/9), which reflected the needs of all groups of countries, including those with economies in transition. His Government had decided to establish a national body to assist in achieving the goals of the Declaration and Programme of Action in the Russian Federation and called on other States to expand cooperation in dealing with social problems. The Commission for Social Development should play a major role in carrying out the decisions taken at the World Summit and should be given comprehensive support. In that connection, however, he pointed out that any changes in the Commission's mandate should be made on the basis of current budget allocations and by reallocating existing resources. The United Nations specialized agencies should step up efforts to develop and implement specific programmes on the basis of the Declaration and Programme of Action.

8. In spite of the considerable difficulties facing it, the Russian Federation continued to attach priority to social questions and ensure observance of basic social rights in the belief that just and stable social development was a prerequisite for economic prosperity. At the initial stage in its reforms, his country's priorities had been to prevent massive unemployment, support socially vulnerable population groups and overcome unfavourable demographic trends. The first signs of economic improvement and stabilization were already evident. Priority was being given to structural reforms. Intensive privatization was under way, and the market economy was expanding. More active assistance by the world community in support of countries with transitional economies could increase the pace of their democratic reforms.

9. His delegation supported United Nations activities to increase the monitoring of the implementation of international plans and programmes of action, including the social development objectives laid down in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Plan of Action on Ageing, the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

10. His delegation was participating in the preparation of the draft world programme of action for youth, and supported the International Plan of Action on Ageing and the observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999. The Russian Federation also supported the Organization's activities aimed at strengthening the role of the family and agreed on the need to draw up a declaration and a plan of action in that area.

11. Mr. Kwang-Jae LEE (Republic of Korea) stressed the need for a spirit of partnership between developed and developing countries in pursuing social development goals. While the main responsibility in that area rested with Governments, international assistance was needed to bolster the efforts of developing countries, especially in Africa and the least developed countries. Expanding trade and investments alone would not solve the urgent problems facing the developing world. Assistance by developed countries would ultimately benefit the donors themselves and thereby contribute to the socio-economic development of the world as a whole.

12. His Government was drawing up a master plan to expand its development support in accordance with its economic capability and to provide technical training to more than 30,000 people from developing countries by the year 2010. Social development efforts must focus in particular on women and children in developing countries, who were the primary victims of poverty and social injustice. Equal rights and opportunities for women in the areas of education, health and family planning were essential for genuine development. For that reason, the results of the recent Fourth World Conference on Women should be reflected in social development programmes. As its first follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, his Government had hosted, with the cooperation of the United Nations, the World Youth Leaders Conference in Seoul from 31 May to 2 June 1995. His country welcomed the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year at the current session of the General Assembly and the draft world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond to be adopted on that occasion. Those two initiatives should give further impetus to world-wide youth policies and programmes.

13. In the rapidly changing world, the strength and unity of the family were more vital than ever. The family, as the basic unit of society, played an indispensable nurturing role and should be fostered. It was also important to meet the needs of vulnerable groups, such as disabled persons, in social development. The adoption of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to monitor their implementation constituted an important part of the United Nations disability programme.

14. Mr. MEKDAD (Syrian Arab Republic) said that social development was essential in order to combat poverty, ignorance and social disintegration and bring about a world governed by equality between people. If social and economic decline were to be averted, there was no alternative to cooperation between developed and developing countries. It was a mistake for the former to think that economic and technical assistance to the latter was not in their own interest, just as it was a mistake for the countries receiving such assistance to rely upon it, rather than depending principally on their own resources to

bring about social economic development. International cooperation should be based on mutual respect and community of interest.

15. Despite having to commit significant resources to defend its land and people against Israeli occupation and expansionism, Syria had achieved impressive results in the field of social development, and had been cited in the 1992 United Nations Human Development Report as one of the 10 leading nations in that respect.

16. In the past two decades, the Syrian Arab Republic had given development top priority. To that end, education had been made compulsory at the primary stage and free at all levels. Health care was free to all. Special attention was paid to all those with special needs. In accordance with the Standard Rules in General Assembly resolution 48/96, the Council of Ministers had passed legislation to equalize opportunities for persons with disabilities.

17. The development policies of his country had led to a rise in the standard of living of the majority, a country-wide increase in educational and health services and a fall in infant mortality. Social and economic development efforts were, however, considerably hampered by the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, which had driven nearly half a million Syrians from their lands. That occupation constituted a flagrant violation of human rights. In all the territory it occupied in Palestine, South Lebanon and the Syrian Golan, Israel was seeking to eradicate national characteristics by destroying houses, expropriating land, splitting up families and spreading poverty and frustration.

18. The international community should increase pressure on Israel to return Arab land to its rightful owners. Israel's current policies were not conducive to a just and lasting peace. An end to military rivalry, foreign occupation and feelings of racial superiority would be conducive to a world free of poverty and injustice, in which relationships would become more democratic, humane and stable.

19. Mr. DONOKUSUMO (Indonesia) said that the international community's increased attention to its social agenda and to the linkage between economic and social development had been reflected at the World Summit for Social Development, where countries had affirmed that the most productive policies were those that empowered people to maximize their capacities, resources and opportunities.

20. In that connection, he reaffirmed Indonesia's support for the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons. In Indonesia, under its national programme, the number of disabled people who had benefited from services had increased considerably. In addition, a number of organizations were working to improve the situation of the disabled in Indonesia. He welcomed the recommendations put forward in the report of the Special Rapporteur on monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (A/50/374). His delegation agreed that emphasis should be placed on advice, support and encouragement rather than on measuring, comparing and controlling, and that developing countries should be assisted in their implementation efforts.

21. Indonesia was also concerned about the situation of older persons, since it faced the prospect of an ageing population. Although the Government provided support to poor families to supplement the traditional family- and community-based approach to caring for older persons, it would have to consider further steps to accommodate the demographic transition. With respect to the programme for the International Year of Older Persons, to be observed in 1999, the preparation of studies on the integration of ageing into the development plans of countries in various socio-economic and demographic situations would be useful for the design of national policies.

22. As noted in the report on the struggle against illiteracy (A/50/181-E/1995/65), Indonesia had participated in the Education-for-All Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries in 1993, as one of the countries with a special responsibility for improving literacy statistics. It was therefore pleased that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had recognized the efforts of one of its national organizations to emphasize the importance of educating women and girls. Over the past two decades, Indonesia had reduced illiteracy by well over half in respect of both women and men, and was committed to further reductions. Such efforts helped people to acquire productive employment.

23. The draft framework for the 1997 Report on the World Social Situation (A/50/84-E/1995/12) should adequately reflect the interrelationship of the various social development issues. The final report should reflect the outcome and follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development and the conclusions of the other major United Nations conferences on social issues, as well as the need for coordinated follow-up of those conferences.

24. Miss MORGAN-MOSS (Panama), speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, said that the recently established Central American Integration System included a programme to promote social development in those countries. The programme would build on past successes, such as those achieved through the education network for Central America and Panama (instituted as a component of the UNESCO Major Project on Education in Latin America and the Caribbean) in terms of literacy, training of education professionals, exchange of experiences and cooperation. Funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and cooperation agencies in North American and European countries had been of decisive importance.

25. The Central American and Panamanian Governments looked forward to the publication of the second report of UNESCO on the situation of education in the world. The first such report had categorically demonstrated the need for ongoing and special education and had guided education policies at the national level, particularly with respect to older persons and the disabled.

26. Important strides had also been made in Central America and Panama in the field of health, through the World Health Organization's Pan American Health Organization. Malaria, influenza and cholera had been controlled through programmes of early warning, prevention and treatment.

27. The presence of millions of land-mines in some Central American countries as a result of armed conflicts was increasing the number of disabled persons. The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with non-governmental organizations in efforts to benefit the disabled and older persons. She hoped that the debates on the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development would encourage countries to take remedial measures commensurate with the seriousness of the social development problems they faced, and that the United Nations would devise appropriate methods and structures for implementing the decisions taken.

28. Mr. ELDEEB (Egypt) said that Governments, the international community and non-governmental organizations each had an individual role to play in implementing the Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development. His Government had already begun to adopt policies and programmes aimed at its implementation, notably concerning the eradication of poverty, in which connection he hoped that the international community would lend the necessary financial and other support. The interrelated issues of the family, children, women, youth, ageing and disabled persons and education were also directly linked to the comprehensive development of any society. Governments should identify the essential needs of all social categories and create a climate conducive to production, while the international community should implement the recommendations put forward by United Nations conferences in recent years, which called for the deployment of financial and technical resources.

29. His delegation wished to commend the report of the Secretary-General on observance of the International Year of the Family (A/50/370); as the basic unit of society, the family played an important role in social development. He asserted that men and women should have equal responsibilities and duties within the family, as well as equal work opportunities. Education was also a means of development. The developing countries were able to derive mutual benefit from sharing their often similar experiences of problems such as illiteracy. The International Literacy Year had highlighted the means of addressing that problem and the distinct role which the media, research institutions and non-governmental organizations could play. The General Assembly should call for a regular 10-year review of achievements in the struggle against illiteracy. In that connection he referred to his own Government's implementation of a literacy programme in conjunction with local authorities and voluntary organizations.

30. Egypt welcomed the Secretary-General's conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 (A/50/114), which would highlight the social and health problems suffered by older persons, as well as means of alleviating such problems. Older persons had a leading socio-economic role to play, particularly in rural areas, and represented a wealth of experience from which Governments could benefit once the necessary channels were in place.

31. On the subject of youth, Egypt had participated in the discussions at the latest session of the Commission on Social Development, which had produced the draft programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond. He hoped that the final draft would be ready for consideration by the General Assembly at its imminent high-level meetings with a view to its adoption on the occasion of the

tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year and the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

32. Egypt attached great importance to the rehabilitation and social integration of disabled persons, through the creation of equal opportunities in suitable education and work. Their marginalization conflicted with religious values and violated their human rights.

33. He concluded by noting that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, would revive hopes of strengthening the international peace and security that were the foundation for social development in its widest sense for all peoples of the world.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FIFTIETH SESSION

Official Records

THIRD COMMITTEE
10th meeting
held on
Monday, 16 October 1995
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 10th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. TSHERING (Bhutan)

later: Mrs. TAVARES ALVAREZ (Dominican Republic)
(Vice-Chairman)

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AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued)

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A/C.3/50/SR.10
30 November 1995
ENGLISH
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/...

95-81596 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 105: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY (continued) (A/50/84-E/1995/12, A/50/114, A/50/156, A/50/163, A/50/181-E/1995/65, A/50/215-S/1995/475, A/50/254-S/1995/501, A/50/370, A/50/374, A/50/425-S/1995/787, A/50/454, A/50/473; A/CONF.166/9)

1. Ms. JANKEY (Botswana) said that the needs of young people must be taken into account in national economic and social development programmes particularly in view of the many pressing youth problems (unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage pregnancy and health-related problems such as HIV/AIDS), which, if not attended to adequately, could lead them to anti-social activities. Governments and the international community should take appropriate and effective measures to deal with the problems of youth, such as involving them in decision-making at the local, national and international levels and executing development programmes. Young people must have the necessary education and skills. To achieve precisely that objective, Botswana had committed itself to promoting universal access to education up to junior secondary level and had adopted in 1994 new policies on education aimed at increasing access to both the secondary and tertiary levels of education. While it was the obligation of Governments and individuals to help young people develop and participate in the life of society, the international community should provide assistance in that regard.

2. Mrs. ROHANI ABDUL KARIM (Malaysia) noted with satisfaction that the world programme of action for youth should make it possible to give them the necessary skills and a sense of social responsibility and said that the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year was an opportunity for the Malaysian Government to reaffirm its commitment to respond to the needs and aspirations of Malaysian youth and that the elaboration of the world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond was of great importance.

3. Of the 1 billion young people in the world, 84 per cent were in developing countries, and over 60 per cent of them were in Asia. No one could ignore the socio-economic implications of that phenomenon since, in many parts of the world, particularly developing countries, unemployment was increasing and there was a lack of resources for social services and education. That situation, if left unchecked, could have disastrous consequences for young people, who might then be drawn into juvenile delinquency, crime and drug abuse. Accordingly, youth in developing countries required better health care and access to better education, training, technical assistance and, above all, credit.

4. Although the problems of youth were paramount, problems affecting older persons, whose relative and absolute population size was increasing, should not be neglected. In accordance with her country's philosophy of a caring society, Malaysia had focused, within the framework of its national development programme, Vision 2020, on the needs of the ageing; and services relating to health, housing and transportation had already been instituted.

5. Malaysia had undertaken programmes in the area of treatment, rehabilitation, training and education to encourage self-reliance among the disabled. The United Nations should strengthen its cooperation with non-governmental organizations in identifying the needs of disabled persons with regard to training and training methods and should continue to implement its Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Malaysia would welcome additional information which facilitated the implementation of the Rules.

6. Her country recognized that the International Year of the Family in 1994 had made it possible to reaffirm the importance of the family, whose increasing disintegration was leading to a breakdown of people's ability to cope and its consequences: crime, child abuse, violence against women, trafficking in women and children for the sex trade, substance abuse, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, divorce, abandoned babies and old people, increased mental illness and so forth. The time had come to return to family life and values and strengthen the institution of the family by adopting policies that would enable families and each of their members to manage economic and social change positively.

7. Mr. ADAWA (Kenya) noted the historical importance of the World Summit for Social Development and said that for full and effective implementation of the commitments made during the various recent United Nations conferences, the industrialized countries and international development assistance agencies should help finance the corresponding programmes in the developing countries, particularly, sub-Saharan African countries. In that connection, Kenya welcomed the inclusion of an additional General Assembly agenda item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development", and would actively participate in the discussion on it.

8. Kenya firmly believed that since people and their social needs should be at the centre of development, priority should be given to the eradication of poverty, the elimination of obstacles to economic and social development, the expansion of productive employment and the creation of a favourable international economic and social environment. While the Government of Kenya was firmly committed to its economic reform process, including the structural adjustment programmes, its reforms included measures to protect the poor and vulnerable persons. For that reason, his delegation continued to urge the international community to improve the social situation in Africa by taking an integrated and comprehensive approach to development as the most effective strategy for the eradication of poverty, designing structural adjustment programmes which took into account the social dimensions of development and aimed in particular to protect vulnerable population groups, endeavouring to find a lasting solution to the debt burden (by reducing or cancelling the bilateral and multilateral debts of low-income countries, particularly those in Africa), allocating new resources to accelerate social development (not merely reallocating existing ones), and increasing productivity through wider and more intensive use of science and technology for sustainable development.

9. In order to protect the poor from the adverse effects of its economic reforms, the Kenyan Government had allocated 5.58 billion Kenya shillings in its 1994-1995 budget to address the social dimensions of development. While that amount was far from the magnitude of funds required, Kenya warmly thanked the

international community, non-governmental organizations and the private sector for the financial support that they had provided for that purpose. Furthermore, Kenya would continue to ensure that the resources allocated for the social dimensions of development would be increased at the national level and called on the international community and international agencies to continue their assistance in that endeavour.

10. With regard to youth, Kenya welcomed the decision by the General Assembly under resolution 49/152 to devote plenary meetings to mark the tenth anniversary of International Youth Year and to consider, with a view to adopting, the world programme of action for youth towards the year 2000 and beyond. Concerned at the numerous problems confronting Kenyan youth, his Government would seek, during the current development plan for the period 1994-1996, to establish a comprehensive national youth development policy, set up financial support for education and training opportunities for young people and accelerate the self-help income-generating projects for youth. In addition, the National Youth Service, which had been established in 1963, would receive greater assistance in order to expand its training programmes, since technical training institutes had been given the necessary support to train youth to take jobs in the informal sectors and actively participate in the development and promotion of small-scale enterprises.

11. The international community had passed various measures to benefit older persons, such as the International Plan of Action on Ageing. Kenya was therefore assisting the United Nations programme on ageing and the African Society of Gerontology to develop and implement a regional programme of activities on ageing. As in most developing countries with a large rural population older persons in Kenya had thus far been cared for by their families, with whom they had traditionally strong ties. Those ties were being eroded as a result of increasing rural migration, and the Government had had to enlist the assistance of non-governmental organizations as well as religious institutions to provide assistance to older persons in need.

12. With reference to disabled persons, Kenya had supported the adoption by the General Assembly of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and it welcomed the efforts made by United Nations bodies to benefit that group. On the national level, the President of Kenya had personally led a campaign to improve the situation of disabled persons and to change attitudes towards them. The Government had put in place special educational programmes for the disabled and had taken measures to facilitate their participation in business and other income-generating activities.

13. With reference to the family, Kenya was strongly of the view that any people-centred development must of necessity focus on the family. At its forty-seventh session, the General Assembly had appealed to donors to pledge further contributions to the Voluntary Fund for the International Year of the Family in order to finance projects, particularly in developing countries. Kenya hoped that appeal would be heeded and given the appropriate attention. Lastly, the Government of Kenya was committed to improving the welfare of the Kenyan population, and for that reason had worked over the years to reduce the high rate of population increase through the Family Planning Association of Kenya.

14. Mr. FERNANDEZ PALACIOS (Cuba) said that the World Summit for Social Development deserved credit for putting man at the centre of the development process. It was also important to establish how much economic policies and models contributed to meeting the material and spiritual needs of the individual at each stage of development. Economic success and democratic institutions were irrelevant if millions of individuals were the victims of discrimination, xenophobia, unemployment, or lacked proper shelter, and if tens of thousands of children were dying of avoidable and curable diseases. The neoliberal doctrine, by sacrificing health, education, culture and social security, had jeopardized social and human development.

15. The priorities and objectives laid out in the Report on the World Social Situation, 1993 (ST/ESA/235-E/1993/50/Rev.1) should be upheld, allowing for the new realities and the problems encountered by mankind. Particular attention should be given to the social situation of developing countries in order to adopt concrete measures to make improvements. The report of the Secretary-General on a conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 (A/50/114) which was structured on several important themes, as well as the report on observance of the International Year of the Family (A/50/370), merited close study.

16. The path to development based upon a just and equitable division of wealth being pursued by Cuba had allowed it to make significant progress in regard to health, education, employment, cultural development and social liberty. Cuba's experience demonstrated that not only could social development precede economic development but that it could help to bring it about. It was for that reason that Cuba hoped to see the gains of the World Summit for Social Development consolidated.

17. Mrs. Tavares Alvarez (Dominican Republic), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

18. Ms. ZHANG Fenq/Kun (China) said that the work done by the United Nations in the area of social development had been remarkable in many respects, particularly in regard to the issues of ageing and disability. The international community and Governments had made significant progress in implementing the International Plan of Action on Ageing since its adoption in 1982. The problem of an ageing population was a general phenomenon from which China was not exempt; indeed, it had the largest population of older persons in the world. The Chinese Government had therefore set a number of objectives in order to guarantee older persons the medical care which would allow them to contribute to the development of society and to live happily. Several measures had been adopted to look after their interests and meet specific goals. Each year on 9 September of the lunar calendar, China observed the day of respect for older persons, which was the occasion of many activities in their honour. China was therefore pleased to welcome the conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999.

19. China, attached great importance to the question of disabled persons, and was convinced that implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities would make it possible to improve the situation of that disadvantaged group. In her view, additional resources should be mobilized

by the United Nations system to further implement the Rules. For its part, China had endeavoured to realize the objectives of equality, participation and common sharing. The needs of persons with disabilities were taken into account in planning for social and economic development, and practical measures had been adopted to improve their situation, particularly in the areas of rehabilitation, medical care, education and employment. The Government had also provided underdeveloped regions with specially earmarked funds to help persons with disabilities to receive training and employment. In addition, China had passed a series of laws to protect their rights and interests.

20. As part of the International Year of the Family, China had organized numerous activities, holding symposiums and raising public awareness of the question. The Chinese delegation hoped that the United Nations would continue to give the matter the attention it deserved.

21. Mr. CRAPATUREANU (Romania) said that he was pleased that, at the initiative of the Danish delegation, the question of follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit would be considered in plenary meetings, thereby providing an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views. The World Summit for Social Development had had as its main focus a new social contract at the global level and the notion of collective social responsibility. States should work together to ensure social and economic development and adopt measures to favour democracy, social justice and human rights. Such cooperation between developed and developing countries should include the United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations and the international financial institutions. Economic and social progress and development should be considered through an integrated approach which could lead to concrete results. Romania, which was in search of a new model for socio-economic development based on the values of democracy, law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as a free market economy, was particularly interested in the follow-up to the Copenhagen Summit.

22. Against the background of the reforms which it had undertaken, Romania proposed to create institutional structures that would allow it to decentralize social protection by involving economic agents, the local public administration, non-governmental organizations and charities, thereby focusing on the most vulnerable zones and categories and encouraging the population to participate directly in such action. Furthermore, in an effort to offer equal opportunities to persons with disabilities in order to mobilize human resources and improve the integration of marginalized groups, the Romanian Government had put in place various arrangements giving them access to education, including at home, and providing for medical care, medicines, free transportation and exemption from many categories of taxes. The State secretariat for the handicapped was responsible for the implementation of the Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities. Romania congratulated the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development for the manner in which he was implementing his mandate and encouraged him to continue in the same manner.

23. He recalled that all societies had a duty not only to look after their elderly members by providing the geriatric care they needed but also to make the most of their experience by encouraging them to participate actively in society. The adoption of a conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation for and observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999 showed how

high the phenomenon of ageing ranked among the international community's priorities.

24. Where the family was concerned, the Romanian Government had adopted a series of policies to protect the family as the basic unit of society, in particular from the social impact of the economic transition, with the cooperation of the non-governmental organizations and the Romanian National Committee for the International Year of the Family.

25. Since youth was the hope of every nation, it devolved on the family, the Government and the international community to initiate efforts to allow young people to develop and flourish. Romania hoped that the world programme of action for youth to the year 2000 and beyond would provide an important framework for guidance in youth matters.

26. Mr. GUBAREVICH (Belarus) considered that the large number and the dimensions of social problems called in question the very bases of the progress of civilization. His Government welcomed the fact that the international community had admitted in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that it must provide assistance to the countries in transition in order to enable them to deal with their social problems. The time had come for the bodies and agencies of the United Nations system to take practical steps to make those obligations a reality. His Government appreciated the work done by the Commission on Social Development; it was convinced that its re-election to membership of the Commission showed that the role it had played in the latter's work had been recognized.

27. There was no question that economic development should improve the social situation of the population. While at the country level that task devolved on the State, internationally it was incumbent on the United Nations. Regrettably, he had to point out that it was precisely in socio-economic matters that the United Nations revealed its greatest weakness, for its rhetoric exceeded its actions. It would be desirable for the terms of reference of the Economic and Social Council to be reinforced and for the Council to elaborate standards of social development for the international community.

28. In the six months which had elapsed since the World Summit for Social Development, social problems in Belarus had worsened. The gradual economic reform which the transition to a market economy required was having adverse repercussions on the population's standard of living and particularly on the most vulnerable sectors such as the disabled, elderly persons and young people. Some persons even believed that more than half of the Belarusian population lived below the poverty line. The growth of unemployment, currently standing at 2 per cent, was kept in check artificially by reducing the length of the working day and the working week and by granting unpaid or part-paid holidays so that concealed unemployment was six to eight times higher than the official figure. It should also be pointed out that the birth rate had fallen by half.

29. A characteristic of Belarus was its ageing population, which was forcing the Government to increase expenditure on retirement and medical assistance and since 1994 had led it to train gerontologists and psychologists. In accordance with the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development,

Belarus had prepared a comprehensive programme for older persons. It fully supported the holding of an International Year of Older Persons in 1999.

30. In endeavouring to resolve the problems of the disabled, whose numbers were increasing substantially, Belarus was preparing, despite its economic difficulties, to implement an overall programme for the prevention of disability and the rehabilitation of the disabled and to promulgate laws in that regard. Other countries in transition were encountering similar problems, and his Government would like the United Nations to help train specialists in that area. The Belarusian delegation welcomed the action taken by the Special Rapporteur to follow up the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and hoped that the Member States of the United Nations would adopt those Rules as the central principle of their national strategies.

31. The serious economic difficulties facing Belarus were also having repercussions on the family. A family allowances act did exist and families had the right to various forms of tax relief. Many legal, educational, psychological, medical and social problems remained to be solved, however. Realizing that it would have to draft special programmes which would take the needs of families into account, the Government of Belarus would be grateful if countries which were more advanced in matters of social protection could help it. His delegation was satisfied with the results of the International Year of the Family and hoped that the United Nations would continue to implement the programmes it had initiated in that connection.

32. Belarus was endeavouring to reform its inefficient economy while minimizing the repercussions of that reform on the social sector. The social security system inherited from the Soviet regime no longer met requirements and social support needed to be re-targeted. The additional laws which had been promulgated did not suffice to ensure that the population received better social protection. While the social reforms the Government had attempted and the stoicism of the population were helping to maintain a relative measure of political stability, Belarus' social problems, if left unresolved, could become a matter of concern for the entire international community. Belarus thus considered that the United Nations specialized agencies should support its efforts in that area. Other than the social problems common to many countries, Belarus had problems of its own deriving from the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster. Nearly 2 million of its inhabitants had been subjected to radiation, but because of the severe financial constraints it was experiencing, Belarus could devote no more than 18 per cent of its budget to remedying the consequences of the disaster. It was therefore in extreme need of assistance from the international organizations, voluntary contribution funds and other States.

33. Belarus would do everything in its power to implement rapidly the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, but it was having to face its many difficulties alone. It was convinced that a global programme of assistance to countries in transition needed to be adopted within the United Nations system; such a programme would provide measures to create or improve social protection systems under market economy conditions, set up an infrastructure for environmental protection, job security and the health of the population, train

and provide refresher courses for managerial staff in the context of a market economy and eradicate poverty. Belarus would be grateful to the United Nations for any measures which it might be able to take to alleviate, however little, the social difficulties afflicting the people of Belarus.

34. Mr. ZIAUDDIN (Bangladesh) said that few concrete plans had emerged from the elaborate Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development and that the follow-up to the Summit had thus far not been encouraging. The general situation in the poorest countries continued to deteriorate and social disintegration, poverty, hunger, unemployment, rising crime and economic problems continued to retard social development and challenge the achievement of social justice.

35. Social development was inevitably linked with economic development and called for an integrated approach. For developing countries, particularly the least developed among them, the necessary national efforts must be supplemented and reinforced by adequate international support and resources; that depended totally on the necessary political will.

36. In Bangladesh, social problems stemmed from poverty and poor economic conditions. The promotion of social development through poverty alleviation, employment generation and human resource development formed the cornerstone of the national development effort. With a view to implementing an integrated strategy for social and economic development, the current Government had launched a new development perspective, and a major share of the development budget was allocated to the social sector, with priority given to education, health and population control. In order to promote social integration, Bangladesh had set up special programmes for women, children, youth, disabled and elderly persons and minorities focusing on reducing illiteracy (through compulsory primary education, non-formal education and adult literacy programmes and innovative schemes such as the food-for-education programme aimed at reducing the drop-out rate), with special emphasis placed on the education of the girl child. The Government had also undertaken innovative programmes to alleviate poverty and, in particular, to address the feminization of poverty, in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and through the regional mechanisms of the South-Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

37. Given the role of youth in bringing about social, economic and political change, concerted action was needed to mobilize their creative potential for the benefit of society. Accordingly, Bangladesh welcomed the formulation of the World Programme of Action for Youth towards the Year 2000 and Beyond. In Bangladesh, where young people comprised one third of the population, a national youth policy had been adopted and programmes were being undertaken to promote youth participation in various areas.

38. Bangladesh believed in the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons and, despite its lack of means and resources, had launched special assistance programmes and set quotas for housing and employment for disabled persons. Although the problems relating to ageing were less acute in Bangladesh than in other countries, largely because of its traditions and customs, the country remained committed to implementing the International Plan of Action on Ageing and had launched national action plans to ensure the full participation

of the elderly in society. Bangladesh also welcomed the conceptual framework of a programme for the observance of the International Year of Older Persons in 1999. Ensuring equality for minorities and other marginalized groups and enabling them to participate fully in society remained priority objectives of the country's social integration and development efforts. Bangladesh also considered that the role of the family as a means of social integration must be recognized and revitalized.

39. Having intensified its efforts at the national and regional levels, Bangladesh believed that it was now necessary to enhance cooperation between the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the international financial institutions and to strengthen existing United Nations social development programmes.

40. Ms. HORIUCHI (Japan) said that social development must be promoted in order to ensure stability and prosperity in a world plagued by regional conflicts which often arose because of poverty and social instability. Her country therefore believed that the United Nations must tackle the social problems that were of concern to the whole world. Her delegation would take up that matter in greater detail when the General Assembly considered the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development, but believed that the agenda of the Third Committee should reflect the progress made and the obstacles encountered in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action. Japan supported the efforts of the United Nations to prepare a report on the world social situation and urged that the report should take into account the review and appraisal of the implementation of those instruments.

41. Her delegation supported in principle the draft framework for the 1997 Report on the World Social Situation contained in document A/50/84-E/1995/12. Greater attention should, however, be given to human resource development and to the issues of equality and equity. Poverty should be addressed in the context of those major questions, which would form two separate clusters.

42. Her delegation would present its views on youth at the special meetings of the General Assembly devoted to that question on 26 and 27 October.

43. Given that Japan was a rapidly ageing society (while persons aged 65 and over had represented 14.1 per cent of the population in 1994, that figure was expected to reach 25.5 per cent by the year 2020), the Japanese Government was working vigorously to provide older persons with decent living conditions and the opportunity to participate in society according to their abilities. A target should be set for the year 2001 for the creation of community-based programmes that would provide older persons with the care they needed and encourage them to participate in society which they would enrich with their skills and wisdom. The International Year of Older Persons, to be observed in 1999, would provide an opportunity for raising global awareness of that issue, and Japan would strive to support the activities conducted by the United Nations in connection with the Year.

44. The International Year of the Family, observed in 1994, and the recent international conferences currently being followed up, had raised global awareness of issues relating to the family. Consequently it was neither

necessary nor wise to develop a new plan of action. It was Japan's view that within the family there should be respect for fundamental rights and the equal status of all individuals, and that in formulating and implementing policies, consideration should be given to the diverse forms the family might take and to the changing pattern of family life. Japan was striving to promote equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women and, as part of those efforts, in 1995 it had ratified Convention 156 of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which dealt with Workers with Family Responsibilities.

45. Japan welcomed the report prepared by the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development on monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (A/50/374). The Standard Rules must be implemented by Member States within their national systems, particularly since, as the Special Rapporteur had emphasized, they promoted more vigorously than did the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons, a goal to which the Japanese Government attached special importance. Japan's long-term programme for disabled persons, formulated some years previously, had been revised in 1993 to focus on eight major areas: public awareness, education and training, employment, health and medicine, welfare, human environment, sports and recreation, culture and international cooperation. There could be no doubt of Japan's commitment to implementing the World Programme of Action since in 1995 it had donated $100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Disability.

46. Social development could not be achieved by Governments alone. Non-governmental organizations and all international organizations should also play an active part.

47. Mr. MINOVES-TRIQUEL (Andorra) said that at the World Summit for Social Development, the heads of State and Government had made a commitment to reduce disparities, eradicate poverty and foster social integration. Lately the idea of security had a more personal meaning, with the individual now more concerned with feeling safe, providing for the members of his family and community and obtaining education for them. On the principle that all social development was people-centred, the Principality of Andorra had proposed adding to the Copenhagen Declaration a commitment, later adopted at the Summit, encouraging dialogue, concerted action and participation by all in the work of building a harmonious society.

48. Andorra was very concerned by unemployment among young people, who were the world's hope, for unemployment swept them towards poverty, drugs and crime. The situation was still more troubling in the developing countries, where the labour pool would increase by 2.3 per cent annually over the next 10 years, necessitating the creation of about 260 million new jobs. That fact must be taken into account in the follow-up to the World Summit and a way must be found to integrate the new generations into the labour force without thereby destroying opportunities for the less young who had long been part of it. In that connection, Andorra welcomed with satisfaction the decision of the General Assembly to declare 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons. The needs of the disabled must also be borne in mind, guaranteeing their integration into the labour force by creating an environment in which they could thrive. Men and

women must come to be valued for their unique qualities and their specific gifts.

49. Lastly, Andorra attached great importance to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which its Minister for Foreign Affairs had recently signed in New York and its Parliament was preparing to ratify. The implementation of the Convention and the Copenhagen commitments would ensure the health and welfare of children, but that would require the United Nations to become a stronger body, more aware of the challenges before it on the issue of security, especially in the social sector.

50. Ms. ENKHTSETSEG (Mongolia) said that the possibility of a peaceful existence was no longer a certainty for the human family, which was in the grips of poverty, uprootedness, hunger and malnutrition, violence and discrimination, rising crime, drug addiction and infectious disease. In Copenhagen, the leaders of the nations participating in the World Summit for Social Development had recognized that those social ills were indeed a source of tension both within and among States, and they had pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the generation of productive employment and the fostering of safe and just societies their overriding goals. Mongolia hoped that the consideration by the General Assembly of agenda item 161 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit would provide fresh impetus to the follow-up at both national and international levels.

51. Her delegation, an original sponsor of the International Literacy Year, attached particular importance to the issue of education and literacy. During the observances of the International Year, national committees established in 118 countries had helped to mobilize public opinion and promote action by Governments and non-governmental organizations to promote education and combat illiteracy. It was more than symbolic that 1990 was also the year in which the number of the world's illiterate adults had stabilized. The objective of worldwide literacy was still now a top priority for the international community, since education was viewed less as a sectoral concern or a social service than as an engine for progress.

52. It was clear from the report of the Secretary-General and the Director General of the United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the progress made and problems encountered in the struggle against illiteracy (A/50/181) that significant advances had been registered in the rise of literacy rates, the number of literate adults and school enrolment in many parts of the world. That progress was even more gratifying because it had come to embrace many developing countries, especially in East Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, which had achieved approximately 90-per-cent literacy.

53. The same report, however, did not disguise the problems that still persisted: more than one adult in five was illiterate; more than three illiterates in five were women; and 129 million children of primary-school age were not in school - all of which required more effective mobilization at both the national and international levels.

54. Mongolia commended UNESCO for having pursued a unified approach to the follow-up to the International Literacy Year and the World Conference on

Education for All, whose common purpose had been to eradicate illiteracy and make education accessible to everyone.

55. Her delegation intended to submit a draft resolution on further cooperation in achieving education for all.

56. Mr. SALEH (Bahrain) said that the item under consideration was important because the human being was at the centre of social development. Social development aimed to improve the human situation, and in that sense it was behind all progress and all development, including economic development.

57. Development must guarantee the individual a clean and safe environment, and also the right to employment, education and health. It must also guarantee people the means of participating in the life of their community.

58. When adopting social development policies, not only must those closely interrelated issues be borne in mind, but also all sectors of the population must be made to participate in social development.

59. Given the central position of the family in society, its well-being was indispensable to that of society. That said, Bahrain's interest in the family was not dictated by social considerations but by cultural, religious and moral imperatives. His country offered all the conditions needed to allow the family to live honourably while following social customs and social and religious traditions.

60. With regard to the report of the Secretary-General on the observance of the International Year of the Family (A/50/370), Bahrain welcomed the efforts made by United Nations institutions and bodies to enhance the role of the family and guarantee the conditions for its social well-being. Private and governmental bodies in Bahrain participated in the 1994 observances of the International Year through activities intended to support the role of the family in society. By also participating in all conferences organized by the United Nations in recent years, Bahrain had enhanced its achievements in the area of family protection and social welfare.

61. It sought to protect all members of the family at all stages of their lives. For instance, article 5 (b) of its 1973 Constitution stipulated that the State guaranteed the social well-being of all its nationals and especially the elderly, the sick, the orphaned or widowed, and the unemployed. Its social security laws guaranteed social coverage for the elderly or the sick who for various reasons were not entitled to the social protection offered by the State. Moreover, as a result of its Arab tradition, the problem of the elderly did not arise at all in Bahrain as it did elsewhere. In Bahrain, older persons were well treated and respected by their families, who set great store by their wisdom.

62. With regard to youth, Bahrain was attempting to educate a new generation capable of promoting social development. Cultural, scientific and sports centres had been built in order to give young people all the necessary means to play a useful role in society.

63. Bahrain also attached great importance to the welfare of persons with disabilities. It had built a national rehabilitation centre for the disabled and sought to provide them with every facility for full participation in society.

64. The World Summit for Social Development had set forth principles which countries should apply according to their individual cultural characteristics in order to develop international cooperation in the field of social development. Bahrain was following with interest the activities carried out to implement the Declaration adopted in Copenhagen, promote social development and mobilize the international community to achieve sustainable economic and social progress.

65. Mrs. MESDOUA (Algeria) said that not only were the benefits of mankind's vast scientific and technical progress not always equitably distributed, but the gap between the haves and the have-nots was widening, both between and within countries. In a world were nations were becoming ever more tightly interconnected, only a joint effort by developed and developing countries could remedy that deterioration of the social situation and lead to tangible results in the field of development in general and social development in particular.

66. Having restored the social dimension to its rightful place in the development process and emphasized the urgent need for better linkage between economic and social factors in national and international policies, the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development constituted a real charter for social development which should inspire action on the part of States and United Nations agencies to establish, in close partnership with the Bretton Woods institutions, genuine ties of cooperation for sustainable economic and social development, of which the government agencies were another mainstay.

67. The problems of poverty, unemployment and social disintegration could not be solved without economic growth and democracy. Algeria was convinced that it was through such solutions that it would achieve development and national harmony and resolve the complex crisis facing it.

68. The 1989 Constitution legally guarantees all members of society the fundamental rights of the individual, social justice, and political equity in a climate of respect for pluralism and diversity. In so doing, it allowed for active cooperation involving the State, local communities, the private sector and civil society.

69. From an economic standpoint, Algeria, determined to undergo a painful but fruitful apprenticeship in the fight against underdevelopment, had undertaken an in-depth restructuring of its economic system in order to prepare for the passage from a centralized economy to one responsive to market forces. It was within that framework that the Algerian Government had taken measures regarding employment, the education of youth, the creation of small individual enterprises, and the setting up of a social protection network that would make it possible to offset the negative effects of the necessary structural adjustment programme. Yet all those measures, together with those taken by other developing countries, could bear fruit only with a return to national growth and the creation of a favourable international economic environment. The

international community must recognize the need for action based on respect for the right of all the Earth's inhabitants to development and dignity.

70. Mr. KIRKLAND (United States of America) said that implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the World Summit for Social Development was primarily the responsibility of individual Governments, to be carried out through programmes designed specifically to meet their countries' needs. Since many countries, particularly African countries or those classified as less developed, were dependent for such activities on bilateral and multilateral assistance, Governments had agreed in the Copenhagen Declaration to complement structural adjustment programmes by enhancing targeted social development investment lending and orienting their sustainable development policies towards the creation of new productive employment in both the rural and urban sectors. In order to create employment, they had agreed to promote free markets and international cooperation in the areas of macroeconomic policy and liberalization of trade and investment. The success of those policies depended heavily on the existence of a strong and democratic civil society based on the universal principle of freedom of assembly and association, free of control by the State or political parties.

71. In that regard, the international financial institutions, specifically the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and United Nations agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had already begun to examine ways of integrating social development programmes into structural adjustment plans. His delegation felt that it would be logical to call upon UNDP to coordinate multilateral assistance within country-specific programmes.

72. Since global budgetary constraints gave no hope that new and additional resources would be allocated for social development, Governments would have to make hard choices and shift some existing resources to programmes whose success had already been proved. The United Nations would also have to make the most efficient use of the resources available for social development and for all of its other programmes. Reform of the Organization was one of the major goals of his delegation as the United Nations marked its fiftieth anniversary.

73. Convinced that social development must mobilize the most valuable resource - people - in order to improve the life of every individual, the United States was committed to ensuring equal opportunity for all, including persons with disabilities, youth and older persons. It fully supported the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities and the efforts of the Special Rapporteur to monitor implementation of those Rules.

74. On the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, his delegation believed that youth, on which the future of all societies depended, must be protected from the dangers of society - disease, drugs, pollution, discrimination, homelessness, violence and war - and must be able to grow up in an environment that opened the doors of society to it. To that end, youth must have access to basic education regardless of gender, age or social or economic background. It would then be possible to achieve - before the year 2000, if possible - the goal of eradicating illiteracy.

75. The future must be prepared by helping youth, but older persons must also be helped to contribute to the present by finally tapping their knowledge and skills. In anticipation of the International Year of Older Persons to be observed in 1999, the United States strongly supported any programmes which used the skills of the able, just as much as it supported programmes which sought to protect the vulnerable.

76. The Fourth World Conference on Women had underlined the need to strengthen the family, within which parents must be able to shelter, nourish and educate their children, particularly the girl child. The United States delegation supported any such initiative leading to full and complete participation of all members of the family in society.

77. Mr. HOUANSOU (Benin) said that the unprecedented upheavals which the international community had experienced had led it to look more closely at social questions. The Secretary-General's interim report on the world social situation (A/50/84) was both a summary of current trends and a preliminary draft for the 1997 report on the same subject.

78. The globalization of the economy brought with it many drawbacks. The positive effects of the structural adjustment programmes were late in making themselves felt and those programmes had instead led to a partial fragmentation of the social sector and a rise in unemployment and crime. In fact, programmes to combat poverty and hunger and to improve health conditions, quality of housing, environmental sanitation and education had had to take second place to the requirements of structural adjustment, to such a degree that development priorities must be redefined. The conditions under which the right to development was realized must be rethought, even if that meant starting with a clean slate and abandoning the contemporary economic order which prevented two thirds of humanity from meeting their fundamental needs.

79. In the future social development must be an integral part of sustainable development as defined at the Rio Earth Summit: development with a human face. However, one must go beyond the collective awareness reflected in the Secretary-General's report to examine the sad fact, acknowledged at the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, that inaction led to stagnation and even backsliding. Rhetoric must be replaced by action, effectively applying the declarations and programmes of action adopted at the closing of the various conferences organized by the United Nations during that decade; that should contribute to the economic and social development of the developing countries and to achieving sustainable development in general.

80. Conflicts and natural catastrophes were creating increasing numbers of handicapped persons. Benin was applying the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities at the national level by taking steps to assist the least privileged members of society in the areas of prevention, rehabilitation and reinsertion.

81. The challenge of social development would be met only if all States succeeded in integrating children and young people - the future of the world,

women - players in sustainable development, older persons - the wisdom of the world, and the family in the social development process in all its aspects.

82. He mentioned the phenomenon of racism, racial and ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and other contemporary forms of intolerance which were spreading among young people and also deplored the use of children and young people as combat soldiers, a practice which constituted a real threat to world peace and could be countered only by improving education and awareness. To do so, States must accede without reservation to the various international instruments related to human rights.

83. Mr. COLOMA (Chile) noted with interest the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (A/50/374). With the appointment of a Special Rapporteur and the creation of a panel of experts to monitor the implementation of the Rules, there was no doubt that the necessary organizational framework had been put into place, which should encourage Governments to budget sufficient funds to apply the Rules at the national level.

84. As the Secretary-General had indicated in his report on the conceptual framework of a programme for the preparation and observance of the International Year of Older Persons (A/50/114), at the beginning of the twenty-first century one person in four would be over the age of 60. In Chile, for example, in 1959 47 per cent of the population had been under 20, whereas in the year 2025 they would probably represent only about 31 per cent of the population. The ageing of the population had reached such a level that it was modifying the social and economic structure of countries and had to be taken into account in planning development, especially in the areas of unemployment, production costs and new patterns of global demand.

85. In addition, it must be remembered that, on the personal level, ageing was synonymous with impoverishment in most developing countries where pensions were minimal. And, because of unemployment among young people, it was often difficult to have older persons play a role in society, making their situation even more tenuous in societies where only work granted social status.

86. Chile expressed its satisfaction that the International Plan of Action on Ageing had brought about greater awareness of the importance of that problem and welcomed the drafting of a timetable of work up until the year 2001 which, along with the plan, should help create the opportunities for dialogue necessary for making the importance of older persons in the transmission of values and in family life better understood, and for making the concept of productive ageing one of the key elements in national and international development plans and programmes.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.